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Abstract

Recently several attempts at assessing college environments has led to proposals for understanding the development of college students and to preliminary strategies for understanding the kinds of influences that different types of college environments have on such development. This study attempts to determine if relationships exist between student personality types and the students' preferred college subcultures. It was hypothesized that no such relationships exist. The College Student Questionnaire (CSQ) parts One and Two, the Clark-Trow Typology, and Holland's Personality Types were utilized. Subjects were 993 college sophomores. Results are presented in terms of college subculture preferences, and personality type classifications, and show that relationships exist between student characteristics and types of environment in college. It is therefore possible for students to consider their personal orientations and a college dominant subculture in determining their college choice. The colleges can also consider the personalities of students when planning programs to change characteristics of its environment. The use of the Clark-Trow typology helps to identify the relative predominance of its subcultures found on a campus at any one time. (Author/KJ)

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# Personality Type and Preferred College Subculture

by

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It is interesting to speculate on why the considerable body of information that exists today on college students has contributed so little to solving student problems. Perhaps the reason is that much of this information is unread by college administrators; perhaps researchers use the wrong media to communicate their findings; or perhaps the reason is that much of the research is irrelevant to the problems of today's generation of college students.

Whatever the reason, one particular aspect needs to be considered: until fairly recently, there had been no instruments for systematically measuring the college environment. This situation obviously prevented the design of studies of student-environment relationships and of the influence of college environments on student behavior. Consequently, personnel programs based upon such research were just not developed.

However, during the past five to ten years, there have been several attempts at assessing the college environment (e.g., Pace and Stern, 1958; Astin and Holland, 1961; Clark, 1962; Trow, 1962; and Peterson, 1965). These attempts have stimulated considerable thought and study of college environments and subcultures (e.g., Stern, 1963; Michael and Boyer, 1965, Hassenger and Weiss, 1966; Creager and Astin, 1968; and Astin, 1968 a). Moreover, these investigations have served as a basis for studies of relationships between the college environment and its students (e.g., Baker, 1966; Lauterbach and Vielhaber, 1966; Thistlewaite and Wheeler, 1966; Pervin, 1967; and Apostal, 1968). Lastly, this entire research direction has now led to proposals for understanding the development of college students and to preliminary strategies for understanding the kinds of influences that different types of college environments have on such development (Astin, 1968 b;

Creager, 1966; and Panos, 1966).

The present study, in contrast with a substantial number of prior investigations, is not conceptualized from the usual "need-press" framework. Instead, it is based on a vocationally-related theory of personality (Holland, 1966) and a system of college student subcultures (Clark, 1962; Trow, 1962). Specifically, the study attempts to determine if relationships exist between student personality types and the students' preferred college subcultures. The hypothesis is that no such relationships exist.

## Method

### Instruments

The College Student Questionnaires (CSQ). The College Student Questionnaires (Peterson, 1965) were developed as a means for gathering a variety of biographical information about college students. The questionnaires are published in two parts; Part 1 is designed for administration to entering freshmen and transfer students, and Part 2 is designed for enrolled undergraduates. Of particular relevance to the present investigation is that both Parts 1 and 2 list 69 fields of study wich enable students to indicate their choices of college majors.

Clark-Trow Typology. Each part of the CSQ includes four items which comprise the Clark-Trow Typology of College Student Subcultures (Clark, 1962; Trow, 1962). This typology describes the following subcultures: Vocational, Academic, Collegiate, and Non-conformist. The Vocational subculture emphasizes the importance of career preparation in college; the Academic subculture values scholarship; the Collegiate subculture prefers extracurricular activities

and social relationships; and the Non-conformist subculture encourages individual fulfillment and the pursuit of personal meaning during college.

Holland's Personality Types. The personality types used in this study are those proposed by Holland in his theory of vocational choice (Holland, 1966). Holland's theory includes six personality types (Realistic, Intellectual, Social, Conventional, Enterprising, and Artistic), and six corresponding environmental models. His contention is that the personality types tend to seek corresponding environments in order to achieve optimum occupational and personal adjustments. In other words, Realistic types tend to seek Realistic environments, Social types tend to seek Social environments, etc.

## Subjects

All sophomores who took the CSQ, Part 2 during the spring semester of 1968 at the University of Maine were considered for selection. A total of 1096 volunteers out of 1536 enrolled sophomores completed the questionnaire. Of the 1096 students, 103 were eliminated from the study either because they did not indicate their choice of college major (see next section) or because they did not respond to the items associated with the Clark-Trow Typology. The study group, therefore, consisted of 993 students, 514 men and 479 women; this figure represents approximately 65 per cent of the enrollment in the sophomore class for that year.

## Classification Into Personality Type

The subjects were classified into the personality types on the basis of their choice of major field (Holland, 1966). Folsom (in press), working with CSQ Part 1 data, employed this procedure in an investigation of Holland's theory. Using Holland's criterion lists for fields of study (Holland, 1966, pp. 122-123), Folsom had three judges independently categorize the 69

major fields listed in CSQ Part 1 into the six personality types. The percentage of interjudge agreement was 87%. On those items where there was disagreement among the judges, the major was classified into a personality type using the criterion of majority agreement. The present study used Folsom's results as criteria to classify students into the personality types.

Analysis of Data

College subculture and personality type tabulations were ordered into 4 by 6 contingency tables for men and for women. Chi square was applied to the data in each table to test the hypothesis that no significant difference exists between the observed and expected frequencies. The .05 level was chosen as the criterion for significance.

## Results

College Subculture Preferences

The college subculture preferences are as follows: For the men, 148 (29%) chose the Vocational subculture; 89 (17%) selected the Academic; 240 (47%) preferred the Collegiate subculture; and 37 (7%) picked the Non-conformist subculture. For women, 86 (18%) chose the Vocational subculture; 60 (13%) selected the Academic; 306 (64%) preferred the Collegiate; and 27 (6%) picked the Non-conformist subculture. These numbers indicate that men and women in the study group differ significantly in their choices of subculture membership ($X^2 = 152.97$; $p < .001$ for 3 degrees of freedom).

Personality Type Classifications

The procedure for classification into personality types yielded the following results: For men, 192 (37%) were classified as Realistic; 118 (23%) as Intellectual; 42 (8%) as Social; 32 (6%) as Conventional;

96 (19%) as Enterprising; and 34 (7%) as Artistic. For the women, 30 (6%) were classified as Realistic; 83 (17%) as Intellectual; 209 (44%) as Social; 9 (2%) as Conventional; 40 (8%) as Enterprising; and 108 (23%) as Artistic. The chi square for these data (personality type be sex) is also highly significant ($X^2$ = 311.29; $p < .001$ for 5 df).

Test of the Hypothesis

Table 1 shows the observed frequencies and chi squares for the college subculture by personality type analyses. The chi square for men ($X^2$=27.94) is significant at the .01 level for 10 degrees of freedom; the Non-conformist frequencies were not included because so few chose this subculture. The chi square for women ($X^2$=24.47) is significant at the .01 level for 8 degrees of freedom; for this analysis, the Non-conformist and Conventional frequencies were not included.

On the basis of these findings, the hypothesis of the study is rejected. The conclusion is that significant relationships exist between personality type and preferred college subculture.

The nature of these relationships is revealed when a clinical examination is made of the observed and expected frequencies for the study variables. For the men, this examination suggests that Realistic personality types tend to prefer the Vocational subculture in college; Enterprising types, on the other hand, tend to avoid the Vocational subculture; and Artistic personalities tend to prefer the Academic subculture. For the women, Social types tend to avoid the Academic subculture; Enterprising types tend to avoid the Vocational subculture but are attracted to the Academic subculture.

Insert Table 1 about here

## Discussion

The results of this investigation are in general agreement with the findings reported in the literature, namely that relationships exist between student characteristics and types of environment in college. Moreover, the nature of the relationships, with one exception, is consistent with clinical exception; it is a little surprising not to have found a relationship between the Intellectual personality type and the Academic subculture. This lack of relationship leads to speculation concerning the description of the Academic subculture (too narrow?, ivory-towerish?) and the method of defining personality types (too much reliance on college major as exclusive definer?).

In spite of these questions, the results do have implications for the design of programs to assist students. The areas of college choice and university change are especially obvious. If, for example, a college's dominant subculture is known, then prospective students, as they consider their personal orientations (and their intended majors!), are able to make reasoned decisions about applying for admission. As far as university change is concerned, a university should consider the personality characteristics of the students that it has and tends to attract when planning programs to change characteristics of its environment. For example, if a university wishes to strengthen its Academic subculture, then it should also make sure that is has at least a nucleus of students whose personalities are compatible with an academic orientation.

Finally, the use of the Clark-Trow Typology has led to reflections concerning its value in describing the environmental make-up of colleges and universities. This Typology does appear to do an adequate job of identifying the relative predominance of its subcultures that might be found on a campus at any one time. However, because of the differential needs of students throughout their college careers, it is hypothesized that the relative predominance of these subcultures for a particular class may change over time.

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TABLE I

Observed Frequencies and Chi Squares for the Personality Type by College Subculture Analyses

| Subculture | Personality Type | | | | | | $X^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Real. | Intell. | Social. | Conv. | Enter. | Art. | |
| **Men (N = 514)** | | | | | | | |
| Vocational | 79 | 27 | 8 | 9 | 18 | 7 | |
| Academic | 29 | 25 | 7 | 2 | 17 | 9 | |
| Collegiate | 78 | 60 | 22 | 10 | 53 | 9 | |
| Non-Conf. | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 27.94[a] |
| **Women (N = 479)** | | | | | | | |
| Vocational | 0 | 14 | 42 | 3 | 1 | 20 | |
| Academic | 6 | 14 | 13 | 0 | 11 | 10 | |
| Collegiate | 10 | 51 | 146 | 6 | 26 | 57 | |
| Non-Conf. | 0 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 24.47[b] |

[a] $p < .01$ for 10 df; Non-Conformist frequencies not included in analysis.

[b] $p < .01$ for 6 df, Non-Conformist and Conventional frequencies not included in analysis.